

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2922

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUANDA 0759

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS AO

SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION: SHORT TERM ASSESSMENT

1. SUMMARY: LUANDA IS RELATIVELY QUIET AFTER A LONG PERIOD OF VIOLENCE. FEWER WHITES AND BLACKS ARE LEAVING THE CITY AND A NUMBER OF WHITES WHO WENT TO PORTUGAL ARE RETURNING. THE MILITARY ARE IN CONTROL OF THE CITY AND DOWNTOWN AREAS HAVE RETURNED TO NORMAL, BUT BLACK GHETTOS ARE STILL SUBJECT VO FREQUENP PALROLS AND SPORADIC SHOOTING. THE REST OF ANGOLA IS QUIET AND THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC TRAVEL. WHITE EXTREMISTS ARE TALKING ABOUT THE FORMATION OF AN ARMY TO MOUNT A
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COUNTER-COUP, BUT PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS ARE DIM FOR THE MOMENT.

BLACK ACTIVISTS HAVE FAILED TO MAKE THEIR INFLUENCE FELT TO ANY GREAT DEGREE; BUT SOME LEADERS CLAIM BLACKS IN THE GHETTOS ARE NOW POLITICALLY AWARE AND OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORT ONE OR ANOTHER LIBERATION GROUP. THERE IS NO CONSENSUS ABOUT MEDIUM OR LONG TERM PROSPECTS FOR PEACEFUL PROGRESS TOWARD INDEPENDENCE BUT ALL OBSERVERS ARE AGREED THAT THE SITUATION HERE WILL BE RELATIVELY CALM FOR THE NEXT FOUR TO SIX WEEKS. WE REMAIN IN WARNING PHASE OF E&E PLAN, BUT THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD WE WILL NEED TO AGAIN CONSIDER EVACUATION FOR SOME TIME. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER A MONTH OF STRIKES, RIOTS, LOOTING, ARSON, SNIPING AND URBAN GUERRILLA WARFARE, LUANDA IS ONCE AGAIN QUIET. THE SECURITY FORCES CONTROL BOTH THE EUROPEAN SECTORS AND THE BLACK GHETTOS KNOWN AS MUCEQUES. THEY HAVE A NEAR MONOPOLY OF FIRE POWER AND CAN IMPOSE THEIR WILL IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT LOCATIONS AT ANY GIVEN TIME. OUR SOURCES, BLACK AND WHITE, ARE AGREED THAT THERE IS LITTLE PROSPECT DURING THE NEXT FOUR TO SIX WEEKS FOR WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE. SOME OBSERVERS ESTIMATE THAT THE SITUATION WILL REMAIN QUIET UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR, WHILE OTHERS LOOK FOR MORE URBAN VIOLENCE IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, ALTHOUGH ON A LESSER SCALE THAN JULY/AUGUST.

3. EVERYONE IN TOWN IS NOW CRITIQUING THE VIOLENCE OF EARLY AUGUST, THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE SITUATION AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR ANGOLA OF THE FEAR AND HATRED THAT IS SPREADING AMONG BLACKS AND WHITES.

4. THREE ANALYSES OF THE CAUSE OF THE VIOLENCE ARE GOING AROUND. THE PRESIDENT OF THE MILITARY JUNTA, ADMIRAL ANTONIO ALVA ROSA COUTINHO TOLD ME THAT MOST OF THE TROUBLE WAS CAUSED BY 1300 CRIMINALS AND AGITATORS WHO HAD BEEN RELEASED FROM PRISON IN A GENERAL AMNESTY AFTER APRIL 25. ACCORDING TO THE ADMIRAL 700 OF THESE UNDESIRABLES HAVE BEEN REARRESTED AND THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER PROBLEM. BLACK LEADERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, LIKE TO THINK THAT THE VIOLENCE IS A MANIFESTATION OF POLITICAL AWARENESS ON THE PART OF BLACKS AND THAT THIS HIGHER LEVEL OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS CAN BE TURNED TO GOOD EFFECT BY THE LIBERATION GROUPS. ONE BLACK LEADER TOLD US THAT THE MPLA AND FNLA ORGANIZED AND DIRECTED THE ACTIVITIES OF BLACKS DURING THE TROUBLES OF AUGUST. A THIRD GROUP BELIEVES THAT THE INITIAL STAGES OF THE

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VIOLENCE WERE THE RESULT OF LIBERATION GROUP EFFORTS, BUT THAT THE BURNING AND LOOTING WERE THE WORK OF COMMON CRIMINALS WHICH LED IN TURN TO THE EXPLOSION OF PENT UP HATRED AGAINST THE MERCHANTS IN THE GHETTOS. OUR ASSESSMENT IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FROM THE PRECEDING VIEWS. WE BELIEVE THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF THE VIOLENCE WAS THE KILLING BY WHITES ON JULY 12-13 OF SEVERAL UNARMED BLACKS IN THE GHETTOS. BLACKS REACTED SPONTANEOUSLY TO THESE ACTS BY BURNING STORES IN THE GHETTOS AND FORCING WHITE MERCHANTS TO

LEAVE. THERE WAS NO PLANNING OR INVOLVEMENT BY LIBERATION GROUPS UP TO THIS POINT. AS THE VIOLENCE GREW THE FNLA MANAGED TO SMUGGLE IN SMALL AMOUNTS OF ARMS AND AGITATORS TO FURTHER DESTABILIZE THE SITUATION. AT THE SAME TIME CRIMINAL ELEMENTS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE CHAOS TO LOOT, AND IT WAS THEY WHO CAUSED MOST OF THE PROPERTY DAMAGE.

5. IN THE WAKE OF THE VIOLENCE STORIES ABOUND OF WELL-ORGANIZED

BLACK GROUPS WITH PLANS TO DESTROY THE CITY AND OF A BURGEONING WHITE EXTREMIST ARMY WHOSE AIM IS TO MOUNT A COUNTER COUP AGAINST THE JUNTA. IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE THE FACTS BUT THE CIVIL AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES HERE ARE MORE CONCERNED IN THE SHORT TERM ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A WHITE EXTREMIST ARMY THAN THEY ARE ABOUT BLACK UPRISINGS. THE MILITARY HAVE MADE INTENSIVE SEARCHES OF THE GHETTOS AND HAVE FOUND VERY FEW MODERN WEAPONS AND NO EVIDENCE OF BLACK PREPARATIONS TO POUR OUT OF THE GHETTOS. COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMY AND JUNTA MEMBER, BRIGADIER PINTO MAGALHAES, TOLD ME ON AUGUST 23 HE BELIEVES MOST OF THE GHETTO BLACKS SYMPATHIZE WITH THE MPLA, BUT THAT HE HAS FOUND NO EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION. HE HAS ALSO CHECKED OUT THE RUMORS OF A WHITE ARMY TRAINING CAMP AND IS CONVINCED THEY HAVE NO BASIS IN FACT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUANDA 0759

6. AT THE HEIGHT OF THE VIOLENCE TWO WEEKS AGO WHITES TALKED INCREASINGLY ABOUT FORMING THEIR OWN ARMY AND THE TALK IS STILL GOING ON. ON THE OTHER HAND, ADMIRAL COUTINHO BELIEVES THAT AS LONG AS THE INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION REMAINS CALM HE WILL HAVE NO UNMANAGEABLE PROBLEMS FROM WHITE EXTREMISTS. WE BELIEVE THERE IS SOME SUBSTANCE TO THE STORIES OF WHITE EXTREMIST EFFORTS TO FORM AN ARMY, BUT WE DO NOT THINK THAT MATTERS HAVE GONE VERY FAR. THE POLITICAL VEHICLE FOR THE WHITES AT THIS TIME IS THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PCDA), A CENTER-RIGHT WHITE DOMINATED FRONT ORGANIZATION COMPOSED OF SEVERAL SMALL PARTIES, INCLUDING TWO BLACK GROUPS. THE PCDA CLAIMS TO HAVE TIES WITH UNITA AND HAS CONVINCED MANY WHITES IN CONFIDENTIAL

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LUANDA THAT IT IS IN THEIR INTEREST TO COOPERATE WITH UNITA. THE PCDA PROBABLY IS BEHIND THE FRA (ANGOLAN RESISTANCE FRONT) A CLANDESTINE ORGANIZATION THAT IS STILL IN THE FORMATIVE STAGE. (WE ARE PUTTING TOGETHER A REPORT ON THE FRA FOR TRANSMITTAL TO WASHINGTON.) WE HAVE NOT FOUND ANY EVIDENCE THAT THE FRA IS AN IMMEDIATE THREAT TO PUBLIC ORDER. FRA ORGANIZERS HAVE TALKED WITH A NUMBER OF BLACK AND WHITE LEADERS IN AN ATTEMPT TO ENLIST THEIR COOPERATION IN A MOVE TO WIN IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE FOR ANGOLA UNDER A WHITE-DOMINATED BLACK GOVERNMENT. FRA ACTIVITIES ARE AN OPEN SECRET AROUND TOWN; PEOPLE WHOM THEY HAVE CONTACTED TALK FREELY TO US AND THE AUTHORITIES SHOULD HAVE TROUBLE ROUNDING UP THE LEADERS IF THEY BECOME A SERIOUS THREAT. FRA STRATEGY, MEANWHILE, IS TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN PORTUGUESE SOLDIERS AND THEIR COMMANDERS SO THAT THEY EITHER WILL NOT FIGHT, OR WILL TURN AGAINST THEIR SUPERIORS.

7. NO ONE HERE HAS GOOD INTELLIGENCE ON THE CAPABILITY OF THE LIBERATION GROUPS TO DESTABILIZE THE SITUATION IN LUANDA THROUGH THE USE OF VIOLENCE, STRIKES OR OTHER PRESSURE TACTICS, ALTHOUGH EVERYONE ASSUMES THIS IS WHAT THE LIBERATION GROUPS WANT TO DO. THE MPLA IS THOUGHT TO HAVE BY FAR THE MOST SUPPORT IN THE GHETTOS. ADMIRAL COUTINHO SEEMS CONFIDENT HE CAN KEEP THE MPLA FROM ACTING; HE TOLD ME HE HAS HAD AN UNOFFICIAL CEASE FIRE WITH THE MPLA SINCE AUGUST 1 AND THAT HE IS IN UNOFFICIAL

CONTACT WITH MPLA LEADERS. GENERAL MAGALHAES, ON THE OTHER HAND, TOLD ME THAT THE MPLA LEADERS WITH WHOM THE MILITARY IS TALKING ARE ALL RESIDENTS OF LUANDA AND HE IS DOUBTFUL OF THEIR ABILITY TO EITHER SPEAK FOR THE MOVEMENT OR INFLUENCE THE LEADERSHIP ALONG LINES ACCEPTABLE TO THE JUNTA. JONAS SAVIMBI AND UNITA HAVE FALLEN INCREASINGLY INTO DISREPUTE AMONG BLACKS AS SAVIMBI HAS BECOME IDENTIFIED WITH WHITE EXTREMIST ASPIRATIONS. THE FNLA IS TRYING TO INFILTRATE LARGE NUMBERS OF GUERRILLAS AND ARMS INTO LUANDA. DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE VIOLENCE HERE IN EARLY AUGUST, PORTUGUESE AIRBORNE TROOPS TRACKED AND BROKE UP A GROUP OF 180 FNLA RECRUITS WHO WERE TRYING TO REACH LUANDA FROM ZAIRE. IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THE MPLA OR THE FNLA WILL BE ABLE TO MOUNT ANY KIND OF CAMPAIGN IN LUANDA WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AND THE GHETTOS SHOULD REMAIN QUIET UNLESS WHITES MANAGE BY ACTS OF VIOLENCE TO PROVOKE POOR BLACKS BEYOND ENDURANCE; THE MILITARY ARE ALERT TO THE POSSIBILITY AND ARE OUT IN FORCE IN THE GHETTOS. BLACK LEADERS TELL US THEY FIND A POSITIVE ELEMENT IN THE VIOLENCE

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IN THAT IT HAS RAISED THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF GHETTO BLACKS AND MADE THEM MORE RECEPTIVE TO THE APPEALS OF AUTHENTIC BLACK LEADERS.

8. AS OF LATE AUGUST, THE SITUATION IS STABLE, AT LEAST FOR THE SHORT TERM. THE MILITARY ARE PRESENT IN STRENGTH IN THE GHETTOS. THE WHITE MERCHANTS THAT WERE THE ORIGINAL TARGETS OF BLACK WRATH HAVE GONE; NOTHING REMAINS OF THEIR STORES BUT PILES OF RUBBLE AND THERE IS LITTLE LEFT CLOSE AT HAND FOR THE BLACKS TO ATTACK. JUST AS IMPORTANT, EVERYONE, BLACK AND WHITE, IS SPENT AFTER SO MUCH UPHEAVAL AND SOME OF THE PRESENT QUIET IS DUE TO EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION ON THE PART OF ALL. SHOTS ARE HEARD FROM TIME TO TIME IN THE GHETTOS, CARS ARE STONED NOW AND THEN AND AN OCCASIONAL BODY IS FOUND, BUT THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IS LOW; NO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES OR POLICE HAVE BEEN KILLED FOR OVER A WEEK. THE AUTHORITIES HAVE MOVED QUICKLY TO GET FOOD TO THE GHETTOS AT FAIR PRICES AND PLAN SOON TO PROMOTE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COOPERATIVES. LIFE IN THE CITY IS BACK TO NORMAL. PLANES ARE LEAVING HERE AT LESS THAN CAPACITY AND MANY MORE SEATS ARE TAKEN ON THE FLIGHTS FROM LISBON THAN WAS THE CASE TWO WEEKS AGO. WITH RESPECT TO THE WILL OF THE MILITARY TO COPE WITH RENEWED VIOLENCE, THE JUNTA MEMBERS HAVE TOLD ME THEY ARE READY AND ABLE TO PUT DOWN TROUBLEMAKERS FROM ANY QUARTER. THE PUBLIC AT LARGE AND KEY LEADERS THROUGHOUT THE CITY LOOK UPON ADMIRAL COUTINHO AS A DECISIVE MAN WHO CANNOT BE PUSHED TOO FAR. THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (MFA) OFFICERS HERE ARE CONTENT WITH THE ADMIRAL'S LEADERSHIP AND QUITE SATISFIED WITH THEMSELVES FOR HAVING ENGINEERED THE REMOVAL OF FORMER GOVERNOR GENERAL SILVERIO MARQUES. THE JUNTA AND THE MFA ARE COOPERATING CLOSELY.

9. PRESS REPORTS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONS THAT LEFT ANGOLA DURING

THE VIOLENCE ARE EXAGGERATED. SOME 33,000 WHITES WENT TO PORTUGAL DURING JULY AND THE FIRST HALF OF AUGUST. THIS IS TWICE THE NUMBER THAT NORMALLY GO EACH YEAR FOR VACATION DURING THIS PERIOD. MANY ARE NOW COMING BACK AND IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY AT THIS POINT WHAT THE NET OUTFLOW WILL BE. AS FOR BLACK FLIGHT FROM THE GHETTOS OF LUANDA, WE HAVE SEEN REPORTS THAT SAY OVER 70,000 HAVE FLED. THE MILITARY, ON THE OTHER HAND, K TELL US THAT ONLY 18,000 LEFT THE CITY, AND THAT MOST OF THESE WERE RECENT ARRIVALS WHO WILL NOT COME BACK. BASED ON OUR SPOT CHECKS OF TRAINS AND BUSES LEAVING LUANDA WE ESTIMATE THAT ABOUT
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25,000 BLACKS HAVE FLED, MOST OF THEM TO THE SOUTH.

10. THE CONSULATE GENERAL REMAINS IN THE WAANING PHASE OF THE E&E PLAN, BUT WE DO NOT BELIEVE WE WILL HAVE TO TAKE FUTHER MEASURES FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. DEPENDENTS OF AMERICAN FIRMS WHO WERE EVACUATED AUGUST 10 HAVE RETURNED TO LUANDA. WE CONTINUE TO UPDATE AND TEST OUR E&E PROCEDURES AND HAVE KEPT IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE MANAGERS OF AMERICAN FIRMS AND OTHER U.S. CITIZENS IN ANGOLA.

11. WE SHALL SHORTLY ATTEMPT A LONGER RANGE ASSESSMENT. FOR THE MOMENT THE ONLY FORETOKEN I HAVE OF WHAT LIES AHEAD IS A COMMENT BY MY SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEAGUE, MALONE BY NAME, THAT I BEAR A REMARKABLE RESEMBLANCE TO SIR ROGER CASEMENT, WHO WAS CONSUL HERE FROM 1898 TO 1901.
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